



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **SAN DIEGO CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS MAYOR'S PLAN TO FUND CRITICAL WATER AND WASTEWATER UPGRADES**

The San Diego City Council voted this evening to adopt Mayor Sanders' recommendations for repairing and improving the City's crumbling water and wastewater systems. On a 7 to 1 vote for wastewater and a 6 to 2 vote for water, the Council approved a plan that will allow the City to address the regulatory mandates, court orders and other needs facing these systems.

"I commend the City Council for adopting a plan that allows us to fix the water and wastewater systems," said Mayor Sanders. "The package of improvements they approved today will let us get back on track toward meeting our responsibilities and ensuring the safety and reliability of these systems into the future," he said.

### **PLAN TO IMPROVE WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**

The water system must soon begin construction of projects called out in a Compliance Order issued by the California Department of Health Services. The wastewater system must build projects required under a consent decree issued on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency in federal court.

"The City has been forced to delay the projects necessary to meet our obligations under the Compliance Order and Consent Decree for too many years, said Mayor Sanders. "The plan approved by Council today shows that the City is committed to meeting these obligations and to moving forward with the critical projects required for these systems," he said.

### **COUNCIL VOTE ASSURES IMPLEMENTATION OF MAYOR'S SAFEGUARD PLAN**

By adopting the package of improvements, the Council also endorsed the implementation of the Mayor's safeguard plan for protecting ratepayer funds. The Mayor's safeguard plan includes four specific elements:

- Creation of a new **Independent Rates Oversight Committee**

- Installation of a **“Dedicated Reserve from Efficiencies and Savings”** to help offset future rate increases in both systems.
- Annual **audits** for both systems
- **Limiting future “Bid-to-goal” contracts** with City employees to one year

Each of these elements is being implemented to help assure ratepayers that the revenues generated from the rate increases will be used efficiently and for the purposes called out in the rate increase proposal.

#### **COMMUNITY GROUPS EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

The City Council took testimony in support of the rate proposal from community leaders representing a diverse group of organizations many of which had conducted independent analyses of the rate package.

The groups represented before the City Council today included business organizations including the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, ratepayer advocates including the San Diego County Taxpayers Association, environmental organizations including San Diego Coastkeeper and trade associations including the Associated General Contractors.

“I know these groups have given careful consideration to the package of repairs and improvements adopted by Council today,” said Mayor Sanders. “I was pleased with the level of attention they devoted to this important issue and was happy to work with them to strengthen the proposal presented to Council.

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